

Halvorson Statement on Juneteenth Holiday

WASHINGTON, DC - Rep. Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) released the following statement today as communities across the country gather to celebrate the Juneteenth holiday:

“Celebrations like Juneteenth are important because they remind us of our common history, which binds us all together. They remind us of how far America has come as a nation while urging us to continue working for equality and justice.

George Santayana famously said that “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”. Juneteenth is about ensuring that we never forget the past, as it is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the abolition of slavery in the United States. It was first celebrated in Galveston, Texas in 1865 as African American Emancipation Day.

Juneteenth reminds us of the evil of human slavery and the terrible toll this appalling practice brought upon our nation. Juneteenth is a day that admonishes us never to forget, but also to build communities across racial, ethnic, and cultural lines. This day reminds us that the strength of America comes from our diverse heritage and the unwavering belief that we are all created equal, endowed with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It reminds us that the only way to build a truly just society is to embrace our common American heritage, to build an America that welcomes people of all colors and classes, of all creeds and religions.”